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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1847

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETEL, TSPA, XG

SUBJECT: MARITIME SATELLITES

DEPT PASS FCC, OTP, COAST GUARD, MARAD, NASA

COPENHAGEN PASS O'NEILL

1. BECAUSE OF EXTREMELY BUSY SCHEDULE AND LATE ENDING OF MOSCOW TALKS US TEAM UNABLE COMPLETE TELEGRAM REPORTING SUBSTANCE OF DISCUSSION BEFORE DEPARTING MOSCOW. THUS THIS SUMMARY REPORT BEING SENT FROM ROME.

2. BRIEF SEPARATE TALK HELD WITH MFA, AND EXTENDED DISCUSSIONS PRIMARILY WITH REPRESENTATION FROM MINISTRY OF MERCHANT MARINE BUT ALSO INCLUDING MINISTRY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS, MINISTRY OF FISHERIES AND OTHERS. LATTER TALKS LASTED FOR TWO HOURS ON FIRST DAY. INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS AT DINNER THAT EVENING HOSTED BY CHARGE AND CONTINUED MORNING AND AFTERNOON ON SECOND DAY. GREAT DEAL OF GROWN WAS COVERED AND MUCH OF IT REPETITIVE AS EACH SIDE REITERATED AND EXPLAINED PRINCIPAL AREA OF INTEREST.

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3. SOVIET SIDE SEEMED PLEASED THAT US HAD VISITED MOSCOW. THERE

WERE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND ENERGETIC EXPRESSIONS OF DIFFERENCES BUT TALKS WERE CARRIED OUT IN ATMOSPHERE OF CONVIVIALITY AND FRIENDLINESS. EACH SIDE INDICATED INTENTION TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO OTHER'S POSITIONS.

4. SOVIETS SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED WITH US INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT THAT US WOULD BE AT LONDON CONFERENCE WITH COOPERATIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE; THAT US HAD REVIEWED ITS PREVIOUS POSITIONS AND WAS PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN INMARSAT PROVIDED US ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS WERE ACCOMMODATED IN ORGANIZATION'S INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE. HOWEVER WHEN US PRESENTED POSITION ON NEED FOR INMARSAT ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE FOR US DESIGNATED ENTITY TO TAKE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL ROLE WITH US GUARANTEE, AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH TWO-AGREEMENT STRUCTURE RATHER THAN SINGLE POE DRAFT CONVENTION, SOVIET DELEGATION TOOK STRONG EXCEPTION.

5. MAKING CLEAR THAT USSR HOPES LONDON CONFERENCE WILL NAIL DOWN INMARSAT INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION, SOVIETS PROTESTED US TWO-AGREEMENT SOLUTION, SAYING THAT PROPOSAL ONLY TWO MONTHS BEFORE CONFERENCE WOULD MAKE ACHIEVEMENT OF AGREEMENT AT LONDON VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE. THEY REPEATEDLY STATED THAT LONDON CONFERENCE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON POE DRAFT CONVENTION AND ITS POSSIBLE ALTERATION, AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT US WOULD NOT SUBMIT TWO-AGREEMENT PROPOSAL AT LONDON. DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS SOVIETS RETURNED AGAIN AND AGAIN TO ARGUMENT THAT LONDON SHOULD FOCUS ON POE DRAFT; AND US COUNTERED ON EACH OCCASION WITH ITS VIEW THAT TWO-AGREEMENT PROPOSAL MUST BE SERIOUSLY VIEWED AS PREFERRED SOLUTION TO MEET US REQUIREMENTS. SOVIETS INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER ACCOMMODATING US NEEDS THROUGH MODIFICATION OF POE DRAFT, RETAINING HOWEVER, THE ONE DOCUMENT APPROACH.

6. WITHOUT REVIEWING HERE ALL OF THE GIVE AND TAKE, THE SOVIETS DID PROMISE THAT THEY WOULD STUDY AND REFLECT ON OUR PROPOSAL CAREFULLY AND GIVE IT THEIR ATTENTIVE CONSIDERATION. IT APPEARED THAT THIS RESPONSE WAS PHRASED DELIBERATELY, AND IN FACT WAS REPEATED MORE THAN ONCE. NONETHELESS THEIR VERY CLEAR POSITION IS THAT ONE AGREEMENT, ALTERED AS NECESSARY, IS THEIR EXPECTATION AND HOPE FOR SUCCESS AT LONDON.

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7. AT START SOVIETS MADE STRONG ARGUMENT ABOUT US USE OF "COMMERCIAL BASIS" IF INMARSAT ORGANIZATIONS STATED IN ARTICLE 3 IN OUTLINE OF US INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT, AND STATED THEIR CONVICTION OF INCOMPATIBILITY OF COMMERCIAL/PROFIT MOTIVE WITH RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTS FOR SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA. US RESPONDED THAT INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WOULD INCLUDE GOVERNMENTAL OBLIGATIONS INCLUDING SPECIFICALLY REQUIREMENTS FOR RESPONSE TO DISTRESS

CALLS AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS. ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO PROVISIONS IN THIS REGARD IN THE PROPOSED INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT, NOTING ALSO THAT THE US WAS AMENABLE TO FURTHER REVISIONS IF NECESSARY TO INSURE ADEQUATE PROVISIONS FOR MARITIME SAFETY AND RADIODETERMINATION IN THE SYSTEM. FURTHER THE US NOTED THAT ITS POSITION IS NOT THAT INMARSAT ORGANIZATION BE SET UP FOR PROFIT AT INMARSAT LEVEL, BUT THAT ROLE OF COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES TO SHIPS, MOST OF WHICH ARE PRIVATELY OWNED AND WHICH CAN GENERATE A PROFIT FOR A PRIVATE ENTITY ON THE BASIS OF ITS CHARGES TO THE USERS OF THE SYSTEM WAS A LEGITIMATE OBJECTIVE AND NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE ORGANIZATION ITSELF BEING NON-PROFIT ORIENTED.

8. SOVIET DELEGATION RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES TO DISCUSSION OF TWO-AGREEMENT ARRANGEMENT AND DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN USG AND DESIGNATED ENTITY, BUT DID NOT ARGUE REPEATEDLY FOR USG GUARANTEE OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. THEY DID ATTEMPT TO DRAW PARALLEL BETWEEN USG CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUCH UN ORGANIZATIONS AS ITU, BUT US REFUTED ARGUMENT BY POINTING OUT ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE IN FUNCTIONS BETWEEN ORGANIZATION SUCH AS ITU AND INMARSAT. WHILE LOGIC OF US ARGUMENT IS CERTAINLY SOUND, SOVIET SIDE DID NOT INDICATE ITS ACCEPTANCE, BUT NEITHER DID IT RETURN TO PRESS THE POINT IN FACT SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR US GUARANTEE OF FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WAS NOT RAISED AGAIN IN CONVERSATIONS. US DID POINT OUT COMSAT SATISFACTORY ROLE IN THIS RESPECT IN INTELSAT AS WELL AS HISTORY OVER HUNDRED YEARS OF NO US COMMUNICATIONS CARRIER DEFAULTING ON INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS. US ALSO STRESSED POINT THAT THERE WOULD BE VERY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USG AND DESIGNATED ENTITY SO THAT ON MATTERS OF GOVERNMENT INTEREST AND RESPONSIBILITY US DESIGNATED ENTITY WOULD NOT ACT IN COUNCIL WITHOUT GUIDANCE FROM USG.

9. THERE WERE OF COURSE SEVERAL OTHER SUBJECTS COVERED SUCH AS ORGANIZATION OF LONDON CONFERENCE, PROCUREMENT POLICY, CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCESS TO SYSTEM, AND CHARGES FOR SYSTEM USE BY MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS, AND IN THESE AREAS SOVIETS INDICATED SOME FLEXIBILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS. HOWEVER, DETAILED REPORTS ON THESE SUBJECTS CAN AWAIT US TEAM'S RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

10. PRINCIPAL IMPRESSION TAKEN FROM THESE EXTENSIVE TALKS IS THAT SOVIETS FEEL THAT IF US AND USSR CAN REACH AGREEMENT BEFORE LONDON CONFERENCE ON PRINCIPAL POINTS OF ISSUE THEN LONDON MAY SEE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. WHILE NOT DISAGREEING WITH IMPORTANCE OF US-USSR MEETING OF MINDS US NONETHELESS MADE CLEAR THAT PROBABLE REALISTIC EXPECTATION FOR LONDON IS AGREEMENT ON ESTABLISHMENT IF INMARSAT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERIM WORKING GROUPS TO IRON OUT COMPLEX OF ISSUES IN PREPARATION FOR SECOND CONFERENCE IN 12-18 MONTHS.

11. SOVIETS WANT TO TALK AGAIN AT BEGINNING OF MARCH AND IT WAS AGREED THAT SOVIET DELEGATION LEADER ATSEROV WILL COME TO WASHINGTON TO MEET WITH US TEAM THAT VISITED MOSCOW. HE INDICATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT SUBJECT OF INMARSAT IS SOLE SUBJECT HE INTENDS TO DISCUSS. SEPARATE TELEGRAM SENT FROM MOSCOW REPORTED SOVIET INTENTION TO POSTPONE MARAD TALKS UNTIL AUGUST.

18. WHILE SOVIETS CLEARLY INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO SERIOUSLY STUDY US TWO-AGREEMENT PROPOSAL IT IS EXPECTED THAT ATSEROV'S PROPOSAL IN WASHINGTON WILL BE TO ALTER DRAFT POE CONVENTION IN EFFORT TO MEET US REQUIREMENTS. VOLPE

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